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Sociologists frequently refer to the mobility of individuals, groups (e.g. families), and social categories (e.g. skilled workers). However, they are not used to apply the concept of mobility to whole societies.

The concept of vertical mobility generally refers to a stratification system where power and prestige are unequally distributed among the units constituting the system, and where this unequal distribution determines the vertical dimension.

Individual mobility is the mobility of a unit. Different from this is the concept of collective mobility; it means the change of the relative position of a social category in the vertical direction in spite of maintaining the characteristics which are relevant for the position of the units.

In the following we do not mean by the concept of mobility of societal units a form of collective mobility, but apply the idea of individual mobility to societal units, for instance to nations. Mobility in this sense means that the societal units change the characteristics which are relevant to their position and, as a logical consequence, their position with regard to the vertical dimension changes. Thus, the movement of the unit is not conceived of as a consequence of a change of the scale or standard which measures the position of the unit; it derives from a change in the relevant characteristics

of the unit. In other words, through its mobility the societal unit acquires a new position; this new position is not ascribed. This, of course, does not exclude the mobility of a societal unit as the result of a change of the scale or standard; it does not exclude either that both occur together, as for instance in the following example:

The development of modern weapons allows a few countries to attain high values on the variable "power" which is relevant to the position of a country; at the same time, this fact also means that the relative position of the other countries with regard to the same variable becomes lower. The acquisition of a higher position by the few countries with great power represents for the others a change of the scale or standard which measures their position, or a collective downward movement.

In speaking about a stratification system of societal units two things are implied:

1) the existence of a scale or standard which measures the position of the units, and
2) the unequal distribution of the units among all possible positions.

The scale or standard measures the prestige of the units. The prestige has one or more determinants which together are called the status configuration of the unit. In other words, the unit is characterized by a status configuration with a certain rank; the rank is identical with the position of the unit in the stratification system.

By definition, the prestige of a unit has a subjective content, while the determinants are defined as objective factors. The subjective quality of the content derives from the fact

that the prestige evaluation is done by individuals. This means that the existence of a stratification system implies some consensus among the evaluating individuals as to the criteria of their evaluation. These criteria are identical with the status or status configuration determining the rank of the unit.

As an empirical fact, such a consensus is problematic. There are some systematic deviations from consensus for instance in the sense that the evaluation of one's own unit is usually higher than the evaluation of the same unit done by an outsider. More important is, however, another deviation which is at the basis of the distinction between different types of societies. The ideal type of modern society is characterized by a consensus as to which status can be acquired, while the ideal type of the feudal society is characterized by a consensus as to the status which are ascribed. In the real world, we only find mixed forms which combine feudal and modern elements. From this fact derives a systematic deviation from the postulated consensus: Some strata emphasize acquired status, while others emphasize ascribed ones. This contradiction is in part the result of the fact that individuals having acquired high positions tend to change them into ascribed positions.

The unequal distribution of prestige means that the units of the system are concentrated around certain values, while some intermediate values are not occupied. An unequal distribution may result from the status structure which in turn is related to the power structure. Thus, the access to the status hierarchies is determined by the power structure. For these reasons we define a stratification system as a system of differential distribution of power and prestige. Moreover, the prestige structure and the power structure are related: There exists a certain tendency towards an equilibrium where each structure supports the other.

If we talk about a stratification system based on societal units we do not only apply the idea of a prestige structure but also the idea of a power structure connected with it.

The existence of such a stratification system implies a common scale or standard, i.e. some consensus within the field of interaction considered. The field of interaction which we are concerned with is the international society, e.g. a field whose units are polities or national societies. Within this field there in fact exists some consensus about a number of societal status. Such status are: income per capita, urbanization, education, GNP, military power, population, etc. The first three status can be interpreted as components of what today usually is called (economic and social) development. As the term "development" indicates, these status can be acquired. A societal status which cannot be acquired is, for instance, population. This, however, is only correct if the possibility of an effective immigration or emigration policy is excluded. Moreover, it is perfectly possible that the members of a certain international stratum share the same opinion about other status. In the international upper stratum such a consensus seems to emerge as to the scientific status of nations.

The mobility of societal units in the sense of individual, not collective, mobility refers to changes of rank in the sense of upward or downward movements based on changes in acquired status values, particularly in income per capita, degree of urbanization and level of education. The movement along acquired status lines implies, of course, a minimum of autonomy of the unit considered.

A fundamental proposition of the theory of individual mobility of societal units states that the position of the unit in the stratification system represents a determinant of the

individual mobility of the unit. This means that the position determines the movement along accessible status lines or the change of status values.

As has been said before and in contrast to collective mobility, a movement of this kind always implies a certain autonomy of the unit. The individual movement implies the unit's autonomy with regard to a constant prestige and power structure. This means that individual mobility in the strict sense transformes an external cause (position) into an internal (autonomous) drive for mobility.

However, this does not exclude that the position of the unit produces an impulse which immediately affects the external power structure as the result of a policy aimed at improving the conditions of access of the unit to the values of the international system. In this case, the position implies a power vacuum with reference to its prestige.

Disagreement or agreement with the existing power distribution, i.e. the existence or absence of an anomic tension, not only means that the relative position of the unit is low or high but also that the primary status which is accessible through the associated secondary status is unfavourably or favourably related to these secondary status. In other words, an anomic tension implies a disequilibrium in the sense that the primary status is lower than the secondary status; and a power excess means that there is a disequilibrium in the sense that the secondary status are lower than the primary status. In the last case the unit may use its privileged position on the primary status line, in comparison with units of lower rank and inverse disequilibrium, as a lever for its own upward mobility. In the first case, units which share the same or similar ranks and have the same kind of disequilibrium (low primary status) and/or units with different

ranks and increasing disequilibrium of the same type with growing rank may try to cooperate and thus increase their power; in this way, they succeed in filling the power vacuum and enhancing their chances of upward mobility.

If the countries with the highest GNP per capita values are analyzed - countries which may meaningfully be said to belong (alone or together with the next lower countries) to the international upper stratum (USA, Canada, Switzerland, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Belgium, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Norway and Holland) - and if the GNP per capita (I) is considered as the primary status or one of the primary status, the following hypotheses emerge. Both of the above mentioned possibilites of individual mobility are involved, the secondary status being higher education (hE).

One group of countries - Holland, Norway, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Denmark, Belgium and Great Britain - is characterized by a positive correlation between hE - I and ΔI (= growth rate of I). All these countries belong to the lower upper stratum. On the other hand, Switzerland and, with certain restrictions, Sweden are examples of countries characterized by a disequilibrium of the kind I > hE; the recent economic expansion of Switzerland in particular is based on the immigration of a work force from countries with lower international rank (Italy, Spain, etc.).

Australia and New Zealand seem to belong to the mobility pattern mentioned in the first place in spite of the fact that their rank is higher than the rank of the seven European countries mentioned before. The location of the USA and Canada at the top of all countries in terms of GNP per capita may determine a specific problem.

In order to specify the mobility patterns, it is convenient to compare two relationships which are characteristic of the upper stratum, with some relationships which apply to all polities for which information is available.

The two relationships are:

1) negative correlation between I and Δ I (= growth rate of I)
2) positive correlation between U (degree of urbanization) and Δ U (= growth rate of U).

In addition, there exists a positive correlation between U and E (= literacy rate) or hE valid for all societies.

Thus, on the one hand, there is a self-sustaining dynamic system: (U $\longrightarrow$ Δ U) $\longrightarrow$ hE, and hE - I $\longrightarrow$ Δ I; and, on the other, a negative association between I and Δ I. U $\longrightarrow$ Δ U implies an acceleration principle which contrasts with the deceleration principle I $\longrightarrow$ Δ I. The joint effect of acceleration (A) and deceleration (D) affects the structural tension hE - I in the process of upward mobility (= increasing I).

Change of hE - I with growing I

		A: h	A: l
D	h	+	+
	l	$\pm$	$\pm$

In other words, in countries with low values for hE - I the deceleration principle has comparatively little effect while it has great weight in countries with high values for hE - I. The weight of the acceleration principle is more or less irrelevant. This explains the significance of the negative relationship between I and Δ I. A possible interpretation in terms of diminishing returns points to the degree of saturation of a nation's market with home produced goods. The smaller the market in relation to I, the greater the effect of the deceleration principle. The relative smallness of the market would not only depend on the size of the home market but also on international competition. At the same time and in addition to what has been said above about the change in the power structure through collaboration, this would explain why collaboration among these countries is associated with an enlargement of the home market. Some support for this is provided by the correlation between belonging to EEC or EFTA and the configuration of values for hE, I and Δ I of the seven European countries which represent the lower upper international stratum.

	hE:h / I:l / Δ I:h	hE:l / I:h / Δ I:l
EFTA	Denmark	UK, Norway
EEC	Holland, Germany, France	Belgium

Denmark does not necessarily contradict the hypothesis since it belongs to those countries which most eagerly try to enter the Common Market. Another country with the same tendency, Austria, has the same configuration as the Common Market countries.

The whole problem can further be illustrated by analyzing the behaviour of countries which share one of the characteristics

of the international upper stratum, i.e. the negative correlation between I and ΔI, but which otherwise occupy contiguous lower ranks in the international stratification system. For this purpose, the Latin American countries have been analyzed. Argentina, Cuba, Panama, Colombia and Costa Rica show a negative correlation between I and ΔI. The following table summarizes the results:

	I	Δ I	U	Δ U
Argentina	550	0.5	48	3.4
Cuba	375	1.3	37	5.3
Panama	350	1.3	22	5.0
Colombia	300	2.1	22	9.7
Costa Rica	250	3.3	18	8.8

The correlations are as follows:

1. I : ΔI = negative (per definitionem)
2. I : U = positive
3. I : ΔU = negative
4. ΔI : U = negative
5. ΔI : ΔU = positive
6. U : ΔU = negative

These five countries share only one of the characteristics of the countries of the international upper stratum. In addition, they belong to the upper ranks of the Latin American stratification system.

This may be interpreted as follows: Countries for which diminishing returns due to market problems are relevant may achieve economic expansion by mobilizing a work force which, on the basis of differences in internal development, is discriminated against (ΔI : ΔU = positive). Thus, a mobility

pattern emerges which is similar to that of Switzerland; in contrast to Switzerland, however, the work force is home based.

In addition, the occupational structure of these countries (with the exception of Panama) is more open than the educational structure (Costa Rica, Colombia, Argentina and Cuba have, together with Uruguay, Mexico and Venezuela, the highest values for ES (= % of the middle and upper occupational categories) minus % of the 15-19 years age group in secondary schools). This means that in these societies pressure from below on the educational structure is comparatively weak. Thus, while in countries belonging to the lower upper stratum the combination of high values for hE - I with high weight of the negative relationship between I and Δ I leads to economic and political cooperation, in the Latin American countries mentioned above the relevance of the negative relationship between I and Δ I is associated with a mobility pattern which in the upper stratum is connected with the lead of the dominant status. The difference derives from the field where a discriminated work force can be recruited.

Moreover, the difference between this group of Latin American countries and the countries belonging to the upper stratum is shown very clearly in the relation between U - I and Δ I:

	U - I (standardized)	Δ I
Argentina	50.3	0.5
Cuba	37.9	1.3
Panama	36.7	1.3
Colombia	23.3	2.1
Costa Rica	9.1	3.3

: negative correlation

	U - I (stadardized)	Δ I	
Great Britain	53.8	2.3	These two countries have the highest U-I values of the upper stratum
Holland	42.0	3.2	
Germany	35.2	6.3	
Denmark	31.5	3.1	
France	7.9	3.5	
Sweden	7.4	3.0	
Norway	5.2	2.6	
Belgium	1.4	2.5	
Switzerland	-10.8	3.4	(exception)
Canada	-16.7	1.6	
U.S.A.	-23.3	1.8	

: positive correlation

A possible explanation may be provided by the fact that, measured by the same standard, the U - I values of the Latin American countries mentioned above are tendentially higher than the values of the countries belonging to the international upper stratum (with the exception of Great Britain and Holland). In other words: the basis from which development starts seems to be quite different among the Latin American countries on the one hand and the countries belonging to the international upper stratum on the other; it is different with regard to the U - I values.

International upper stratum (max. values)	U - I	Latinamerican upper stratum (max. values)	U - I
Great Britain	53.9	Chile	54.5
Holland	42.1	Argentina	50.3
FR Germany	35.2	Venezuela	45.5
Australia	34.3	Cuba	37.9
Denmark	31.5	Panama	36.7
New Zealand	29.3	Brazil	30.6
France	7.9	Colombia	23.3
Sweden	7.4	Costa Rica	9.1
		(data for Uruguay were not available)	

Moreover, the correlation between hE-I and Δ I is negative in these countries:

	hE - I	Δ I
Argentina	23.7	0.5
Panama	5.9	1.3
Colombia	4.7	2.1
Costa Rica	2.5	3.3
Cuba	-3.7	1.3

Since hE here is not dependent upon a self-sustaining dynamic system - as is true for the countries belonging to the lower upper stratum - high values for hE - I do not necessarily indicate a particularly strong relevance of the deceleration principle (negative relationship between I and Δ I). On the other hand, low values for Δ U are clearly associated with a strong relevance of this principle.